

Keeping the music alive

The Moody Blues, Doobie Brothers and Joan Armatrading help send off this year's jazz fest

BY LYNN MOORE, THE GAZETTE JULY 5, 2010



Joan Armatrading, who plays Theatre Maisonneuve of Place des Arts tonight, says she loves interacting with the crowd.

Photograph by: Montreal International Jazz Festival, Photo courtesy of Montreal International Jazz Festival

MONTREAL - British singer-songwriter Joan Armatrading knows that today marks her first appearance at the Montreal International Jazz Festival. But don't press for details about other stops on a tour that began in March in Germany, spans Britain and the U.S., and concludes in August in Salmon Arm, B.C.

"I often don't remember a place until I get there and then it sort of comes running back," said the songstress over a very bad telephone connection from a tour stop on one of Britain's Channel Islands.

For weeks, Armatrading's people have been trying to line up this interview with the artist who, despite hits such as Show Some Emotion and Love and Affection, is better known and appreciated in Europe than in North America.

Travel time, time differences and a demanding concert schedule have translated into a narrow window of opportunity. So, after twice trying to get a clear phone line, Armatrading was reduced to shouting into the

receiver to make herself heard above the static.

The artist, whose synthesis of rock, blues, soul and reggae has earned her three Grammy nominations, seemed to be in good voice.

"Whether it's a hall or a festival or a tent in the middle of a field, you aren't really there until you are in front of the audience," she explained. "That is really why you are (on tour), to play to the people and experience the interaction with the audience.

"That is what you remember. That is why you do all of this."

Armatrading, whose show will include selections from her 20th album, *This Charming Life*, is one of a few veterans working their way to Montreal this week.